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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Sixty-first session

Summary record of the 26th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 8 June 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Bras Gomes

Contents

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Fifth periodic report of Sri Lanka

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Fifth periodic report of Sri Lanka (E/C.12/LKA/5, E/C.12/LKA/Q/5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Sri Lanka took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Aryasingha** (Sri Lanka), introducing his country's fifth periodic report (E/C.12/LKA/5), said that relevant ministries and agencies had taken part in preparing the report. Civil society organizations and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka had also been involved.

3. The presidential election of 2015 had been a watershed moment in Sri Lanka and had helped to build the foundation needed for stability and the advancement of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. A new Constitution was being drafted by a steering committee under the Prime Minister and would be finalized by the end of 2017. It would address the legal and policy framework for implementation of the Covenant and include provisions recommended by the Subcommittee on Fundamental Rights of the Constitutional Assembly. Economic, social and cultural rights were safeguarded by policies, administrative regulations and institutional mechanisms, as well as access to legal remedies through the courts.

4. Since 2010, Sri Lanka had increased checks and balances in government, strengthened the capacity and autonomy of the national Human Rights Commission and finalized a new National Human Rights Action Plan, which contained a chapter on economic, social and cultural rights. The Government had developed a policy framework and national action plan to address sexual and gender-based violence and a national policy on child protection and had taken steps to increase investment in economic development to benefit rural women. A comprehensive National Migration Health Policy had been developed in 2013 and considerable progress had been made in the delivery of health care. The Office of National Unity and Reconciliation was implementing programmes to foster religious harmony and strengthen inter-faith dialogue. Measures had also been taken to protect the rights of the Adivasi (Veddah) community.

5. The Right to Information Act had been enacted in 2016, and over 1,500 requests for information had been received in the first month following its entry into force. The Act was intended to foster a culture of transparency and accountability. The Government was committed to working with the international community on issues relating to reconciliation, justice and reparations. It was conscious of the need to consult and involve the public if reform efforts were to be successful and sustainable. It also recognized the need for enhanced inter-agency cooperation and coordination with stakeholders, including civil society; increased coordination between central and provincial authorities; and the collection of credible disaggregated data.

6. **Mr. Kedzia** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee welcomed the State party's implementation of recommendations made in the framework of the national reconciliation process. It noted, however, that economic, social and cultural rights had been largely excluded from the work of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. It was of concern that the current Constitution referred to economic, social and cultural rights as policy directives and did not confer or impose any legal rights or obligations in respect of them; moreover, such rights were not enforceable in any court. Under article 16, the constitutionality of certain discriminatory laws could not be subject to judicial review. Article 28 provided that the enjoyment of rights and freedoms was inseparable from the performance of duties and obligations. Did that mean that individuals could be deprived of their rights for failing to fulfil their constitutional duties?

7. He wished to know what status the Covenant would have under the new Constitution and whether it would be directly applicable by the judiciary. He would also

like to know whether it would be possible to use public interest litigation to advance economic, social and cultural rights. In addition, he would like to hear whether the Constitution would provide a legal framework for the work of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, including institutional and procedural guarantees of its independence, adequate definition of its powers and provision of sufficient financial, physical and human resources. He also wished to know whether the Commission would be given the power to protect economic, social and cultural rights, which appeared to be excluded from its present mandate. In addition, he wondered whether the State party planned to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

8. It would be useful to know how the Government planned to ensure that the National Human Rights Action Plan for the period 2017-2021 would, unlike the previous plan, in fact be implemented. The Committee had been informed that the Government had removed provisions from the Plan calling for the decriminalization of sex work and consensual sexual activity between adults of the same gender. He would appreciate a comment from the delegation in that regard.

9. He was curious as to whether the Samurdhi poverty alleviation programme had a human rights-based approach and to what extent it addressed economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee had been informed that State funding for social protection programmes and for education and health had been reduced sharply, and he would appreciate information from the delegation about those cuts. In particular, he wished to know whether the Government had taken into account the Committee's guidance on retrogressive austerity measures, which were compatible with the Covenant only if they were temporary, proportional, non-discriminatory and protected disadvantaged and marginalized persons. He also wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that employees in free trade zones could fully enjoy their economic and social rights.

10. The current legal framework for countering discrimination appeared to suffer from significant shortcomings. He wondered whether the State party planned to expand the anti-discrimination provisions of the Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the basis of, for example, national or social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would address, inter alia, caste-based discrimination. It would be helpful to know whether the State party intended to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and whether the Government planned to establish a legal framework for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Lastly, he would welcome information about any planned legislative measures to eliminate legal and de facto discrimination against women and about the implementation of the 2016 law establishing a 25 per cent quota for women in local government bodies.

11. **Ms. Shin**, noting that de facto discrimination against women included rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and sexual harassment, asked what measures the Government was taking to address such discrimination and to strengthen the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the National Committee on Women. She applauded the State party's decision to establish an independent national commission on women, which she hoped would be empowered to receive complaints from women, and would welcome information on the time frame for its establishment.

12. **Mr. Dasgupta** said that little headway appeared to have been made in implementing the Official Language Policy, although it had been in place for over 16 years. He wondered why it was that government institutions were still unable to provide services in all official languages if government officials were required to speak all three languages. The policy was an excellent one, but failure to implement it was tantamount to discrimination against speakers of certain languages.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

13. **Mr. Pulle** (Sri Lanka) said that the current Constitution contained specific chapters on fundamental rights and language rights and established the responsibility of the State to pursue objectives related to the Covenant, including the achievement of an adequate standard of living for all persons and universal access to education. Under chapter 6 of the Constitution, economic, social and cultural rights were recognized as "directive principles of state policy" which guided the enactment of laws and the governance of the country.

Both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal had made reference to those directive principles in their judgments, thus recognizing rights enshrined in the Covenant. For example, in the case of *Seneviratne and another v. University Grants Commission* of 1980, the Supreme Court had judged that due recognition must be given to the directive principles of State policy.

14. Other judgments had invoked article 12.1, which stipulated that all persons were entitled to equal protection under the law, to uphold the right to education, the right to strike and the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, among other rights. Some of those judgments had also explicitly referenced the Covenant. The judicial interpretation of article 126 of the Constitution had evolved to permit public interest litigation groups to bring rights-related cases before the courts. A mechanism known as "epistolary jurisdiction" also permitted any individual to write to the Chief Justice regarding human rights violations in order for the case to be brought before the Supreme Court.

15. **Mr. Gunatilleke** (Sri Lanka) said that there had been a vibrant debate in the context of constitutional reform on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights. The Public Representations Committee on Constitutional Reform, on the basis of over 3,000 submissions received from the general public on the issue, had recommended the enumeration of specific economic, social and cultural rights in the Constitution and the provision of judicial remedies for violations of those rights. The Subcommittee on Fundamental Rights, which had been established to formulate recommendations in relation to constitutional reform, had also recommended that the rights under the Covenant should be justiciable. The Steering Committee of the Constitutional Assembly was currently considering the recommendations.

16. As part of discussions on the new Constitution, the Public Representations Committee and the Subcommittee on Fundamental Rights had both specifically recommended that discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation should be prohibited. Article 12.1 of the current Constitution guaranteed equality and equal protection of the law without exception. Article 12.2, which listed prohibited forms of discrimination, was non-exhaustive and thus implicitly prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Unfortunately, however, victims of such discrimination were often reluctant to file complaints with law enforcement bodies. Other remedies available to them included the lodging of complaints with the National Human Rights Commission and invoking the fundamental rights jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

17. The report produced by the Subcommittee on Fundamental Rights recommended that any law inconsistent with the fundamental rights chapter of the new Constitution, which would presumably explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, would be declared void. Therefore, once the new Constitution was adopted, any provisions of the Criminal Code that were deemed a violation of human rights would be subject to judicial review. A new policy on reconciliation had also recently been approved which included a commitment to amend or repeal any discriminatory laws.

18. **Ms. Manatunga** (Sri Lanka) said that the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan would be overseen by a high-level interministerial mechanism that would provide for consultation with all stakeholders, including international organizations and civil society. Reviews of the implementation of the Action Plan were scheduled in the short and medium terms. The final design of the mechanism would be based on the policy decisions of the Cabinet. The Action Plan was currently being translated into all official languages, as the Government was committed to making it accessible to all communities.

19. **Ms. Sumanasekara** (Sri Lanka) said that the number of seats held by women in local government bodies was increasing as a result of the 25 per cent quota system. The Government was committed to establishing a national commission on women. A draft bill for that purpose was expected to be submitted to Parliament in the near future. Gender-based violence was a key area of concern for the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the National Committee on Women. The National Action Plan to Address Sexual and Gender-based Violence had been launched in 2016. Discussions had been held recently

with civil society on how to implement and monitor the Action Plan. Eight government ministries would be involved in implementing it.

20. Training modules on violence against women had been developed and incorporated into police training programmes. The Prevention of Domestic Violence Action Plan also included awareness-raising measures and training for law enforcement bodies and members of the judiciary. There were a total of six women's shelters across the country, the majority of which were located in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Civil society organizations were responsible for managing two of the shelters. Amendments to the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act had been proposed in order to improve its effectiveness and would be submitted to Parliament for approval. The number of reported cases of violence against women was increasing, despite the Government's efforts. The Government had established a database and was collecting information on violence against women, including cases of cyberviolence.

21. Efforts were also being made to amend Muslim Personal Law in order to remove its discriminatory provisions, particularly in relation to marriage. Plans had been drawn up to hold public consultations on the issue and to discuss the matter with Muslim communities. A national plan had also been developed with a view to assisting female heads of household, particularly those who had been affected by the war. Consultations had been held with civil society on that plan. In addition, sexual harassment committees had been established in workplaces, and approval had recently been received to set up gender mainstreaming committees in the main government ministries.

22. **Ms. Manatunga** (Sri Lanka) said that the implementation of the Official Language Policy had been difficult owing to the protracted internal conflict. However, both administrative and constitutional measures had been taken to ensure its implementation. Articles 18, 19 and 22 of the Constitution recognized both Sinhala and Tamil as official national languages of Sri Lanka. A recruitment drive had been launched in the police force with a view to employing male and female officers conversant in Tamil. A number of individuals had successfully challenged the non-implementation of the Official Language Policy before the courts and redress had been given in such cases.

23. **Mr. Pulle** (Sri Lanka) said that in two recent cases individuals had appealed to the courts on the grounds that their language rights had been violated. In one case, the complainant had successfully petitioned the Supreme Court to have legal documentation, which was initially only available in Sinhala, translated into English. Another case was currently pending in which the complainant had demanded that the National Medicines Regulatory Authority ensure that the instructions on the packaging of medication were available in all official languages.

24. **Mr. Aryasingha** (Sri Lanka) noted that the European Commission had recently recognized the important steps taken by Sri Lanka to improve governance and enhance respect for human rights, including through the adoption of the 19th amendment to the Constitution, which had re-established the independence of key institutions, such as the national Human Rights Commission.

25. **Mr. Sadi** said that, while he welcomed the positive steps taken, the current situation in Sri Lanka did not appear to be as rosy as the delegation's statements suggested. He would like to know how the new Constitution would address the root causes of the conflict that had plagued the country for nearly 30 years. Regarding the status of the Covenant in domestic legislation, the State party's approach seemed to be at odds with the Committee's general comment No. 9 on the domestic application of the Covenant, which made it clear that the Covenant should either be incorporated outright into national legislation or be reflected faithfully therein.

26. **Ms. Shin** said that she wished to know when the State party planned to establish an independent national commission on women. Such a commission was urgently needed, as the national Human Rights Commission dealt only with public sector issues, whereas a large proportion of discrimination and violence against women occurred in the private sector.

27. **Mr. Uprimny** said that without an independent and impartial judiciary it was not possible to enforce economic, social or cultural rights. He recalled that the Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Sri Lanka to that body (CCPR/C/LKA/CO/5), had stressed the importance of enhancing the judiciary's independence and that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers had also emphasized the need to strengthen the justice system and make it more accessible and accountable. He would like to know how the new Constitution would support the strengthening of the judiciary.

28. **Ms. Liebenberg** asked whether the State party intended to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

29. **Mr. Dasgupta** said that he wished to know the number of cases in which officials had been denied promotions or otherwise sanctioned because of their inability to work in more than one official language.

30. **Mr. Kedzia** said that, from Mr. Pulle's remarks about the justiciability of Covenant rights, one might conclude that the situation in Sri Lanka in that regard was perfect. Yet other members of the delegation had alluded to controversy regarding the status of economic, social and cultural rights in the constitutional reform process. Could the delegation comment on that apparent contradiction? The National Human Rights Action Plan referred to the enshrinement in the Constitution of certain rights protected under the Covenant, such as the right to adequate housing. It did not, however, mention a series of other rights, including the right to safe and healthy working conditions or the right to form or join trade unions. He would appreciate a comment from the delegation on those omissions.

31. Supreme Court decisions could play a valuable role in upholding Covenant rights, and in many countries jurisprudence had paved the way for new rights-related legislation. But if the idea of enshrining economic, social and cultural rights in the Constitution remained controversial then it could be difficult to enshrine them in legislation. For example, the Supreme Court had appeared to be referring not to the Covenant but to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when it had stated that the right to education had been acknowledged through article 12 of the Constitution, which established the right to equal protection of the law. However, article 29 of the Constitution stated that article 27 and chapter 4 did not confer or impose legal rights or obligations and the provisions were not enforceable in any court or tribunal. If that provision remained unchanged, rights holders would continue to lack the power to claim their rights.

32. **Mr. Aryasingha** (Sri Lanka) said his delegation was not suggesting that the situation with regard to the implementation of cultural, economic and social rights in his country was ideal. Many areas needed improving, and there were ongoing attempts to do that.

33. **Ms. Sumanasekara** (Sri Lanka) said that the Government aimed to have an independent national commission on women in place by the end of 2017.

34. **Mr. Wimalaweera** (Sri Lanka) said that the current Constitution recognized trade union rights and that two pieces of legislation were in place to uphold them. Trade Unions Ordinance No. 14 of 1935, as amended, protected the right of workers to participate in trade unions. In fact, Sri Lanka had around 2,000 registered unions. Industrial Disputes Act No. 56 of 1999 covered violations of the right to unionize. The Department of Labour monitored labour conditions in the country, and the National Labour Advisory Council had been established to resolve labour-related matters. His Government believed that the system in place for the protection of labour rights was adequate.

35. **Mr. Pulle** (Sri Lanka) said that the 19th amendment to the Constitution had strengthened safeguards for appointing judges. For example, the approval of the Constitutional Council was now required for naming judges to the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and some other judicial offices, such as that of the Attorney-General. The Supreme Court had recently had a Tamil-speaking Chief Justice and there had been other high-level judges who were of Tamil ethnicity. The many Supreme Court judgments recognizing the economic, social and cultural rights did in fact refer to the Covenant. In his

view, the current arrangement with regard to justiciability of Covenant rights was adequate, although of course there was always room for improvement.

36. **Mr. Zerbini Ribeiro Leão** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to know whether the series of measures to promote stable employment and decent work outlined in the State party's report had been successful. It would also be useful to know whether the quality of work available to women and young people, whose participation in the labour market remained low, had improved. Could the delegation provide statistics to illustrate the progress made? He would welcome further information on the measures the State party was taking to combat child labour in the formal and informal sectors. Had the measures mentioned in paragraph 114 of the periodic report been effective? Were there updated records regarding child labour in the formal sector?

37. It was not clear whether a minimum wage had been set for all employment sectors and whether those minimum levels were sufficient to enable workers and their families to enjoy an adequate standard of living. If so, could the State party provide corroborative data? He would also like specific information on progress in preventing and punishing sexual harassment in the workplace.

38. Paragraph 84 of the State party's report indicated that the Rataviruwo Foundation had been created to safeguard the economic, social and cultural rights of migrant workers living in Sri Lanka. He would like to know whether it had been effective in doing so. What challenges had been encountered and what had been the most notable successes? He understood that some migrants, in particular refugees and asylum seekers, were prohibited from working in Sri Lanka. Did the State party intend to lift that prohibition?

39. He wished to know whether the legal framework pertaining to the right to strike had changed and what the main challenges were in relation to that right and the right to form trade unions. Did workers, particularly in free trade zones, enjoy guarantees with regard to their rights and their freedom of activity? Lastly, it would be interesting to hear what challenges had been encountered in drawing up a universal social protection scheme, what positive results had been achieved to date and whether workers in the informal sector would be covered by the plan.

40. **Mr. Wimalaweera** (Sri Lanka) said that it was puzzling that women's rate of participation in the labour force remained low, at around 34 per cent, despite the country's low birth rate and high literacy rate. Measures to increase female participation were being developed, in the light of recommendations from studies conducted with support from the World Bank and other international organizations, including the International Labour Organization. Those measures included introducing more flexible labour legislation to allow women to work after 10 p.m., which would give them greater access to well-paid jobs in information technology and other industries. In addition, steps were being taken to promote female entrepreneurship, and awareness campaigns were being conducted to change cultural attitudes towards women's employment.

41. Surveys had shown that the percentage of children engaged in labour had dropped from 2.5 per cent in 1999 to 1 per cent in 2009, thanks to legislative amendments prohibiting the employment of children aged between 16 and 18 years in certain hazardous occupations and also to initiatives such as the Child Labour Free Zone, piloted in the district of Ratnapura.

42. The wages of private sector workers were established in accordance with the Wages Boards Ordinance or the Shop and Office Employees Act. The latter applied to white-collar workers and therefore did not provide for a minimum wage. Under the Wages Boards Ordinance, minimum wages for blue-collar workers were periodically reassessed by tripartite committees, composed of employers, trade union representatives and government officials, taking into account the economic situation in the country and in the industry in question. Act No. 3 of 2016 on the national minimum wage of workers had established a minimum wage floor that was applicable to all workers in Sri Lanka; the Government was taking steps to evaluate the impact of that Act. Workers' pay was also, in many cases, supplemented by additional benefits and protected by collective agreements between trade unions and employers' organizations.

43. The right to strike was guaranteed by the Trade Union Ordinance, which protected the right of trade unions to operate freely. The new Constitution would contain a specific section on trade union rights. Facilitation centres had been set up in five free trade zones to promote interaction between workers and trade union leaders. The Department of Labour had issued circulars and guidelines on the protection of trade union rights and ensured that any employer that discriminated against a worker for participating in trade union activities would be prosecuted.

44. The Employment Provident Fund was the country's largest pension scheme, catering for 80 per cent of the older population, with a total membership of between 2.6 million and 3 million persons. There were plans to introduce a system of payment by instalments to replace the Fund's current lump-sum payment system.

45. **Ms. Sumanasekara** (Sri Lanka) said that sexual harassment committees in workplaces had been reorganized in late 2016, based on guidelines issued by the National Human Rights Commission, and were now composed of seven members of staff from various departments of the organization concerned, including junior staff. Upon receipt of a complaint, the committee appointed one of its members to investigate the case. If the allegations were confirmed, the case was referred to the head of the organization, who imposed a sanction on the offender in accordance with the organization's internal regulations. As the committees had only been in operation for a few months, no data on cases dealt with were available.

46. The Government had drawn up a National Human Resources and Employment Policy in 2012, with a view to promoting women's participation in the labour market, especially the formal sector. The policy outlined a number of measures, such as setting up childcare facilities in workplaces and providing skills development training for women. The Government had set aside a budget of 20 million Sri Lankan rupees for the establishment of workplace day-care centres in 2017. A further 600 centres would be set up at plantations and other workplaces through an initiative supported by the World Bank.

47. **Mr. Pulle** (Sri Lanka) said that his country's commitment to eradicating sexual harassment in the workplace was reflected in a recent Supreme Court judgment in a case regarding the dismissal of a female teacher who had been harassed by the school principal. The Court had ruled that the teacher's rights had been violated and that she ought to be compensated and reinstated in her former position.

48. **Mr. Gunatilleke** (Sri Lanka) said that the Subcommittee on Fundamental Rights, a multiparty parliamentary body involved in drafting the new Constitution, had recommended expanding the existing provisions on labour and trade union rights to include explicit references to the right of all citizens to enjoy just and favourable conditions of work and to participate in trade union activities.

49. **Ms. Indraratne** (Sri Lanka) said that, in 2016, the unemployment rate had been 4.4 per cent and the number of employed persons had increased by 1.5 per cent to 7.948 billion, mainly due to the expansion of the industrial and service sectors. The agricultural sector, which was in decline, had accounted for 27 per cent of employment in 2016, while the industrial and service sectors had accounted for 26 per cent and 47 per cent of employment, respectively.

50. **Ms. Liebenberg** (Country Task Force), recalling the concerns expressed in paragraphs 15 and 25 of the Committee's previous concluding observations (E/C.12/LKA/CO/2-4), said that it was worrying that marital rape had not yet been criminalized and that the recommended legislative reforms to prevent early marriage and abolish patrilineal inheritance had not yet been carried out. She wished to know what steps would be taken to implement the Committee's recommendations in that regard.

51. In the light of reports of high levels of child abuse, a fragmented child protection system and poor implementation of child protection policies, she would like to know what measures would be taken to improve coordination between the various bodies responsible for child-related issues and when the national child protection policy for 2017-2027 and its five-year action plan would be adopted. She would also like to hear whether the

Government intended to repeal the provisions of the Criminal Code that prohibited same-sex relationships.

52. The State party had made commendable progress in combating extreme poverty; nevertheless, living standards remained low for much of the population and some regions and social groups remained particularly vulnerable to poverty, food insecurity and indebtedness. What steps would be taken to improve living standards throughout the country and to reduce social and geographical inequalities?

53. The Committee was concerned by reports that internally displaced persons, many of whom had not yet been resettled, faced numerous challenges, including poor living conditions and disputes over landownership. They were often resettled on land that was not suitable for agriculture and were more vulnerable to poverty and malnutrition as a result. She would like to know whether there were plans to enact legislation on land restitution to give legal effect to the national policy on durable solutions for persons affected by conflict-related displacement; whether the Government intended to establish an independent national land commission to oversee the implementation of an equitable land policy, as recommended by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission; and what time frames were envisaged for the resettlement of the remaining internally displaced persons.

54. The Committee had been informed that military occupation, commercial activities conducted by the military and large-scale development projects had led to the dispossession and displacement of vulnerable communities and that, in many cases, the Land Acquisition Act had been violated and inadequate compensation had been provided. She would like to know what steps would be taken to expedite the demilitarization of land in the north and east of the country, to prevent the military from engaging in commercial activities and to strengthen the legal framework relating to development-related expropriation of land and evictions.

55. In the light of the significant decrease in the health budget that had reportedly taken place between 2016 and 2017 she wondered what long-term plans the Government had for the health sector. In particular, what steps would be taken to avoid a situation in which a poorly funded public system operated alongside a prohibitively expensive private system and what measures would be implemented to improve mental health services, given the prevalence of mental health problems? It would also be helpful to know whether the Government intended to develop a rights-based food policy and related legislation, with broad civil society participation, to address the problem of malnutrition, which, according to the World Food Programme, affected 5.2 million persons and 18 per cent of pregnant women.

56. Lastly, the Committee had noted with concern that abortion continued to be permitted only when a mother's health was at risk and would welcome information on any plans to amend abortion legislation, particularly with regard to cases of rape and incest, in order to protect the reproductive rights of women and girls. It would also be interested in hearing whether a comprehensive review of sexual and reproductive health services would be conducted to bring those services into line with its general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health.

57. **Mr. Uprimny** said that he would appreciate more information on diversity among the judiciary of the high courts. As he understood it, only one high-level judge, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was of Tamil origin.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.